Reading Toolkit: Grade 4 Objective 2.A.4.a

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Informational Text

Indicator 4. Determine important ideas and messages in informational texts

Objective a. Identify and explain the author's/text's purpose and intended audience

Assessment Limits:

Purpose of the author or the text or a portion of the text

Purpose of the author or the text or a portion of the text

Connections between the text and the intended audience

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Activities

- Teacher will guide students as they brainstorm a list of reasons for which an author would write an informational text such as to help with directions, describe a procedure, or to explain an idea. Students may be given the name or topic of an informational text. Present students with several examples of informational texts for which a purpose has already been identified. During classroom discussion have students provide text-based support for each article's purpose. Next have students work with a partner. Rotate among the partners a series of informational passages for which they will determine a purpose and locate text-based support for the purpose. Assign each group an article to be presented to the entire class. During the presentation students must:
  - summarize the article
  - state its purpose
  - support its purpose from text

- Provide students with an informational article. After reading, students will use an organizer developed by the teacher on which details from the article have been listed. Students will review the entire list of details and draw a conclusion about the purpose/s of the article. After determining the purpose, students will suggest an intended audience/s for whom this article will have importance. Students may continue to practice by using additional informational passages in which they will determine details that indicate purpose.

Details	Purpose	Intended Audience

- Under teacher direction students will brainstorm reasons for which they would read a newspaper. In a newspaper find several different types of informational text such as an editorial, an advertisement, and a news story. Read each selection. Choose one text, and identify several different people who would read this text and why they would choose to read it. Next, determine a way the information in this text could be used in the real world. Assume the persona of another reader and explain to the entire class your interest in the text and how you would use this in your job or daily life.

- Students will read an informational text. After reading the text, students will move into small groups. Each group will be given an envelope containing sentence strips. On the sentence strips the teacher will have written direct statements from text that state the author's purpose and details that support the author's purpose. The students will read and then divide the strips into two categories: statements of purpose and statements of support to determine the purpose of a text. After a teacher check, students will use Pass a Problem strategy to complete all the teacher-prepared envelopes. Teacher Note: Pass a Problem-When students have completed their first activity they are directed by the teacher to pass their problem/envelope to another group.

Clarification

Reading Grade 4 Indicator 2.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will express an understanding of the key points or thoughts in the text, which are the important ideas and messages. These are sometimes directly stated in the text, but for more complex texts, a reader will determine the implied, important ideas and messages by synthesizing ideas across the text(s).

In order to understand important ideas or messages in a text, a reader should determine the author's apparent purpose for writing. The author's purpose, either implied or directly stated, is the main reason for the text. Most authors write to inform, persuade, or to express personal ideas relative to his or her selected topic. Authors write for different audiences; an author's intended audience should be apparent through the author's choice of topic, diction, organization, and graphic aids. Knowing these features and the intended audience for a text helps a reader determine a purpose for reading, which will enhance a reader's understanding of the text as a whole.

Once a reader understands an author's or text's purpose, he or she can speculate as to how someone might use the text. To do so, a reader explores the application of the text to personal or content-specific use. A critical reader applies the text for personal or content specific use and to determine issues and ideas within a text or across texts and their personal and societal implications.

The ability to distinguish between facts and opinions is a prerequisite reading skill for identifying and explaining an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective. A fact can be defined as something that can be proven true while an opinion is a belief or feeling about a subject. Authors use a combination of facts and opinions in their writing, most often using facts to support their opinions. Once a reader can identify an author's opinion on a topic, the main idea or message can be more clearly understood. An author's opinion with the evidence, details, and examples used to support the opinion become the author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective.

When stating and supporting main ideas and messages, a reader must first identify the main idea of the text. To do so, a reader must identify the topic or subject of the text, which is often evident in the title or first paragraph(s) of an informational text. Then, after reading an entire text, a reader must identify the main point that the author/text makes about the topic or subject. The author's message is the same thing as the main idea; however, a message is usually present in more complex, subjective text. A message is often more author-centered, whereas a main idea is more text-centered. If the main idea or message is not directly stated in the text, a reader must use the details and information in the text to infer the main idea or message. A reader supports the main idea or message by using details from the text that relate to it and that help him/her understand the main idea. This process can be done for the entire text or for a small portion of text.

Summarizing or paraphrasing a text or a portion of a text is an essential skill for a reader when comprehending informational text. A reader is better able to determine the important ideas and messages in text if he/she is able to summarize it. To do so, a reader must state the main idea in his/her own words and then select only details from the text that contribute to the identified main idea. Paraphrasing, when a reader restates an idea in his or her own words, is a key step to summarizing a text. This can be done for a small portion of text, such as a paragraph, as well as for a chapter or the entire text.

Authors use details and examples in their writing to clarify, highlight, or enhance their ideas. A critical reader will be able to identify information not related, or peripheral, to the main idea of a text. Doing so will help a reader disregard redundant as well as extraneous information when summarizing the text or identifying the main idea or message. Especially for complex text, a reader may analyze the effect this extraneous information has on the main idea or message and make decisions or draw conclusions about why an author used that information. This skill is useful as readers develop their own opinions and ideas relative to a text.

When a reader compares and contrasts textual ideas, elements, and features within and across texts, he/she is identifying relationships between and among ideas. Authors also organize their ideas to show a sequence of ideas or to show cause and effect. Once a reader identifies a relationship that exists among ideas in a text, he/she can think more analytically about that relationship. A critical reader will also make connections to prior knowledge, which are the beliefs or background a reader brings to a text.

In order to draw conclusions about and make generalizations from informational text, a reader should first be able to state the main idea as well as to summarize a text. When a reader draws conclusions, he/she uses information from the text—such as the text patterns or text features—that can be either stated or implied. A reader makes a judgment or a decision that is new to him or her since it is not directly stated in the text. A conclusion or generalization is dependent on the information in a text but is external to it.

An ability to connect text to prior knowledge or experience helps a reader identify personally with a text. A reader identifies similarities between what is being described, explained, or narrated and what he or she has experienced, heard or read about. A critical reader forma opinions about the content within a text during and after reading and is then able to develop his or her own ides about information from a text.

As readers have more experiences with these skills and with increasingly complex texts, their cognitive abilities will increase as well. Experienced readers will be able not only to determine a main idea or message, but also to develop skills at analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a main idea or message by making connections to ideas and messages expressed in other texts or to their personal experiences.

Public Release #1 - Selected Response (SR) Item

Handout(s):

- Chinese Almond Cookies

Reading Grade 4 Objective 2.A.4.a

Read "Chinese Almond Cookies" and answer the following question. The author includes the introduction in order to tell

A. about the regions of China
B. where the cookies came from
C. about Chinese immigrants
D. how to serve afternoon tea

Correct Answer:
B

Chinese Almond Cookies

By David C. King

Each region of China has its own special style of cooking. When Chinese immigrants began arriving in the United States in the mid-1800s, they brought with them many of the delicious recipes from their homeland. Some of the immigrants established restaurants and bakeries. Chinese food soon became popular throughout the country. In traditional Chinese cooking, the main meal of the day would usually include fruit for dessert. Sweets, like the tasty cookies you'll make in this recipe, were usually served with afternoon tea.

INGREDIENTS
1/4 pound butter or vegetable shortening, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon whole milk or light cream
11/4 cups all-purpose flour
dash of salt (about 1/8 teaspoon)
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon almond extract (available in the spice section of supermarkets)
36 blanched almond halves or 18 whole almonds cut in half

EQUIPMENT
measuring cup
measuring spoons
2 medium-size mixing bowls
wooden mixing spoon
eggbeater
2 cookie sheets
paring knife (to be used by an adult for cutting whole almonds)
teaspoon
adult helper

YIELDS
about 3 dozen cookies

STEPS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the softened butter in a mixing bowl and stir it well with a mixing spoon to make it creamy. If you use vegetable shortening, you won't need to stir it much.
3. Add the sugar to the butter or shortening, a little at a time. As you add the sugar, stir constantly. Keep stirring until the mixture lightens in color.
4. Add the egg, vanilla, and milk or cream. Beat the mixture well with an eggbeater until all the ingredients are blended.
5. Place the flour, salt, and baking powder in the other mixing bowl. Stir the mixture with a clean, dry spoon.
6. Add the flour mixture to the first mixture, a little at a time, stirring constantly.
7. Add the almond extract and mix the ingredients well with the eggbeater.
8. Using one slightly rounded teaspoon for each cookie, place the dough on ungreased cookie sheets. Flatten each cookie a little with the spoon and allow about an inch of space between them.
9. Press a half almond onto the center of each cookie. If you use whole almonds, ask your adult helper to cut them in half the long way with a paring knife.
10. With the adult's help, bake the cookies for 8 to 10 minutes. Check the cookies frequently. They're done when they turn golden brown.